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- "The Bible for Home and School." Edited by SHAILER MATHEWS.
New York: Macmillan.
- The Epistle to the Hebrews.** By E. J. GOODSPEED, 1908.
xi+132 pages. \$0.50.
- Acts.** By G. H. GILBERT, 1908. viii+267 pages. \$0.75.
- "The Westminster New Testament." Edited by A. E. GARVIE.
New York and London: Revell.
- The Gospel of St. Matthew.** By DAVID SMITH, 1908. 256
pages. \$0.75.
- The Gospel of St. John.** By H. W. Clark, 1908. 259 pages.
\$0.75.
- The Acts of the Apostles.** By H. T. Andrews, 1908. 318
pages. \$0.75.
- "The Interpreter's Commentary." By LYMAN ABBOTT AND J. E.
McFADYEN. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co.
- The Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians.** By J. E.
McFADYEN, 1909. 266 pages. \$1.50.

"The Bible for Home and School" states that it proposes to place the results of the best modern biblical scholarship at the disposal of the general reader. It does not aim to supplant the more exhaustive and technical commentaries, but to furnish a reliable handbook for the lay reader, the Sunday-school teacher, or the clergyman who wishes only such brief comments as may be necessary to make clear the meaning of the scriptural writer. An understanding of the biblical text is the controlling interest of the work. Its plan is simple. All critical processes, as well as all extreme and doubtful opinions, are eliminated. The text of the Revised Version of 1881, accompanied by a running analysis, is printed on the upper part of the page with explanatory comments beneath, and carefully prepared introductions discuss the special problems relating to each book. A subject-index is supplied, and *Hebrews* has also an index of citations from the Bible and from other early literature.

Perhaps no other New Testament book presents more difficult introductory problems than does *Hebrews*. Its authorship, its destination, its date and place of writing offer the chief perplexities. After a discussion of the evidence, Tertullian's statement that the book is from Barnabas (the early companion of Paul) is accepted. He is thought to have written to the Christians at Rome late in the time of Domitian (81-96 A.D.), and the place from which he wrote was possibly Philippi or Corinth, at least some place lying between Ephesus and Rome. The discussion of these problems is clear, the evidence is fully presented and the conclusions are

drawn with caution. The idea that Hebrews may have in some degree called forth the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians is an interesting suggestion. In the commentary proper, while the English translation is made the basis, the idea is often brought out more vividly by a fresh rendering of the original or by a concise explanatory phrase, for example, "the very image of his substance, i. e., *the exact stamp of his nature*" (1:3). The notes are compact and fairly comprehensive, the philological, historical, and theological phases of the study all receiving due attention. The comments also offer a more minute subdivision of the subject-matter than that given in the paragraph headings of the text.

Acts, the second volume to appear in this series, follows the same general lines as the first. The introduction treats such questions as character, content, authorship, date, and historical value. The discussion of the authorship begins with observations upon the so-called "we-source" which is commonly supposed to appear first in Acts 16:10. More is assigned to this document than the four groups of passages in which "we" occurs. Its author is thought to have been Luke "the beloved physician" mentioned by Paul (Col. 4:14). Further investigation leads to the conclusion that the same person also composed the rest of the book at a later date, the whole having been completed some time between 70 and 90 A.D. This general position is in agreement with Harnack's recently expressed views upon the same subject. On the basis of this conclusion the historical worth of *Acts* is esteemed very highly. While the book is not of uniform value throughout, and its testimony is not to be given precedence over that of the Pauline epistles, yet "as to those parts which we have no outside means of testing we are constrained by the character of the diary itself and by the evidence that its author was also the author of the entire book, to be favorably predisposed in regard to their trustworthiness." To comment upon such a book as *Acts*, where questions of historicity are often so perplexing, is particularly difficult, nor have all the difficulties been overcome in the present treatise. To say, for instance, that while the death of Ananias and Sapphira may be regarded as a divine judgment, we must hold that it took place according to natural laws, scarcely seems adequate. May it be interpreted as a divine judgment? Is not the real issue whether the incident actually did or did not happen? On the whole the notes are clear and accurate, and as complete as the nature of the present series permitted.

"The Westminster New Testament" also professes to adopt the standpoint of modern biblical scholarship, "but only the generally accepted results and not the vagaries of individual critics," and it would present these results "in such a fashion as to avoid unnecessarily giving any offense

or causing any difficulty to the reverent Bible student." It has in mind the needs of teachers, lay preachers, and others engaged in Christian work. The volumes are uniform in plan. Problems of introduction are discussed, the text is printed in topical sections and is followed by explanatory comments made on the basis of the English, and each volume contains an index and a colored map. The use of the old version is unfortunate. Space now used to bring the translation up to date might have served other purposes, nor have the defects of the old rendering always been corrected.

In quality there is some variety among the different parts of the series. The work upon Acts best represents the results of modern scholarship while the one upon Matthew is least satisfactory. Here the general editor's purpose to avoid the "vagaries of individual critics" seems to have been thwarted, for the reader is offered only the oral-tradition solution of the synoptic problem—a view long since discredited except by a few who still follow the lead of the English scholar, Arthur Wright. If there is one result at which modern study has arrived it is that Mark's gospel is in the main the source of the narrative material common to the synoptics. Of the entire treatment of Matthew it may be said that the reader who is interested in the historical side of the study will find very slight attention paid to his wants.

The treatment of John is somewhat more judicial in spirit, but extremely conservative in point of view. The distinct theological interest of the evangelist (who is the apostle John) is recognized, but it will not be granted that this is detrimental to the historical value of the gospel. It is "a substantially accurate record of what Jesus said and did, written by one who accompanied with him, who gives in these pages what he has seen with his eyes, what he has heard, and what his hands have handled." With this starting-point the interpreter can pass by most of the difficulties which this gospel presents to the modern student. For example, the discrepancies between John and the synoptics seem sufficiently explained by remarking that neither tells the whole tale; it is only by putting the various accounts together that we make the picture complete. But does such procedure clarify or dim the true picture of Jesus? This is one of the problems with which modern critical scholarship struggles, and more attention to this point might have been expected in a series which professes to have regard for modern issues in Bible study.

The problems of Acts are treated in a brief compass but with a degree of thoroughness. Harnack's view of Lukan authorship for the entire book is accepted, its composition is dated about 80 A.D., and as for its historical value "there can be little doubt that, taken as a whole, it gives us a faithful

picture of the development of the early church." But this opinion is held with some reserve in matters of detail, as when Luke is found to have misinterpreted the phenomenon of speaking with tongues; or to have taken literally the reference to the death of Ananias and Sapphira, whereas the story as first told narrated their spiritual death, or to have made a serious anachronism in reporting the speech of Gamaliel. Not all the difficulties are so easily disposed of, however, nor is the author inclined to make hasty pronouncements upon disputed points.

The first five volumes of "The Interpreter's Commentary" by Lyman Abbott first appeared in 1875-88, covering the gospels, Acts, and Romans. The series is now continued in this volume upon I and II Corinthians and Galatians by the Old Testament scholar, J. E. McFadyen. Brief introductions discuss some questions of interest about the epistles but do not regard particularly their special perplexities. While historical problems are not entirely ignored, they are only incidental to the type of interpretation here presented. The strength of the work lies in its appreciation of the apostle's thought. It gives in a more popular form such exposition as one would find, say, in the "Expositor's Greek Testament." The Authorized Version is printed at the top of the page and below is a topical division of the material with extended notes which interweave a new translation (the Revised Version in the main) with interpretative comments. While the work evidently is intended chiefly for those who use the English, occasionally the notes assume the reader's knowledge of Greek.

The task which each of the above series, in its own way, undertakes to perform is one which is likely to attract more attention in the future than it has in the past. In recent years the progress of biblical science has placed much new material at the disposal of the interpreter, and it is fitting that the assured results of this research should be made accessible to those who do not care to take the time or the trouble to follow the processes of investigation which engage the attention of the specialist.

SHIRLEY JACKSON CASE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

St. Paul's Epistles to Colossae and Laodicea; The Epistle to the Colossians viewed in relation to the Epistle to the Ephesians. By JOHN RUTHERFURD. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; New York: Scribners, 1909. 207 pages. \$2.25.

The title and preface to this book lead the reader to expect a scholarly comparison of the Epistle to the Colossians with that to the Ephesians. The author says in his preface: "An attempt is here made to trace the unity